

No more than coude the leste of us;
Ne nat scarsly Macrobeus,
(He that wroot al thavisoun
That he mette, king Scipioun,
The noble man, the Affrican,
Swiche mervayles fortuneth than)
I trowe, arede my dremes even.
Lo, thus hit was, this was my sweven.

The Dream.



DE thoughte thus: that hit
was May,
And in the dawning ther I
lay,
Me mette thus, in my bed
al naked:
I loked forth, for I was
waked
With smale foules a gret
hepe.

That had affrayed me out of slepe
Through noyse and swetnesse of hir song;
And, as me mette, they sate among,
Upon my chambre-roof withoute,
Upon the tyles, al aboute,
And songen, everich in his wyse,
The moste solempne servyse
By note, that ever man, I trowe,
Had herd; for som of hem song lowe,
Som hye, and al of oon acorde.
To telle shortly, at oo worde,
Was never yherd so swete a steven,
But hit had be a thing of heven;
So mery a soun, so swete entunes,
That certes, for the toun of Tewnes,
I nolde but I had herd hem singe,
for al my chambre gan to ringe
Through singing of hir armonye.
for instrument nor melodye
Was nowher herd yet half so swete,
Nor of acorde half so mete;
for ther was noon of hem that feyned
To singe, for ech of hem him peyned
To finde out mery crafty notes;
They ne spared not hir throtes.
And, sooth to seyn, my chambre was
ful wel depeynted, and with glas
Were al the windowes wel yglased,
ful clere, and nat an hole ycrased,
That to beholde hit was gret joye.
for boolly al the storie of Troye
Was in the glasing ywroght thus,
Of Ector and king Priamus,
Of Achilles and Lamedon,
Of Medea and of Jason,
Of Paris, Eleyne, and Lavync.
And alle the walles with colours fyne
Were peynted, bothe text and glose,
Of al the Romaunce of the Rose.
My windowes weren shet echon,
And through the glas the sunne shon
Upon my bed with brighte bemes,
With many glade gilden stremes;

And eek the welken was so fair,
Blew, bright, clere was the air,
And ful atempre, for sothe, hit was;
for nother cold nor hoot hit nas,
Ne in al the welken was a cloude.

AND as I lay thus, wonder loude
Me thoughte I herde an hunte blowe
Tassaye his horn, and for to knowe
Whether hit were clere or hors of soun.

HERDE goinge, up and doune,
Men, hors, houndes, and other thing;
And al men speken of hunting;
How they wolde slee the hert with strengthe,
And how the hert had, upon lengthe,
So moche embosed, I not now what,
Anon right, when I herde that,
How they wolde on huntinge goon,
I was right glad, and up anoon;
I took my hors, and forth I wente
Out of my chambre; I never stente
Til I com to the feld withoute.
Ther overtook I a gret route
Of hundes and eek of foresteres,
With many relays and lymeres,
And hyed hem to the forest faste,
And I with hem; so at the laste
I asked oon, ladde a lymere:
Say, fellow, who shal huntun here
Quod I; and he answerde ageyn:
Sir, thempour Octovien,
Quod he, and is heer faste by.

A goddess halfe, in good tyme, quod I,
Go we faste! and gan to ryde,
Whan we came to the forest side,
Every man dide, right anoon,
As to hunting fil to doon.
The mayster/hunte anoon, fot/hoot,
With a gret horne blew three moot
At the uncoupling of his houndes.
Within a whyl the hert yfounded is,
Yhalowed, and rechased faste
Longe tyme; and at the laste,
This hert rused and stal away
fro alle the houndes a prey way.
The houndes had overshote hem alle,
And were on a defaute yfalle;
Therwith the hunte wonder faste
Blew a forloyn at the laste.

WAS go walked fro my tree,
And as I wente, ther cam by me
A whelp, that fauned me as I stood,
That hadde yfolowed, and coude no good.
Hit com and creep to me as lowe,
Right as hit hadde me yknowe,
Hild down his heed and joynd his eres,
And leyde al smothe down his heres.
I wolde han caught hit, and anoon
Hit fledde, and was fro me goon;
And I him folwed, and hit forth wente
Down by a floury grene wente
ful thikke of gras, ful softe and swete,
With floures fele, faire under fete,
And litel used, hit seemed thus;

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for bothe flora and Zephirus,
They two that make floures growe,
Had mad hir dwelling ther, I trowe;
for hit was, on to beholde,
As thogh the erthe envye wolde
To be gayer than the heven,
To have mo floures, swiche seven
As in the welken sterres be.
Hit had forgete the povertie
That winter, through his colde morwes,
Had mad hit suffren, and his sorwes;
Al was forgotten, and that was sene.
for al the wode was waxen grene,
Swetnesse of dewe had mad it waxe.

IT is no need eek for to axe
Whether ther were many grene greves,
Or thikke of trees, so ful of leves;
And every tree stood by himselve
fro other wel ten foot or twelve.
So grette trees, so huge of strengthe,
Of forty or fifty fadme lengthe,
Clene withoute bough or stikke,
With croppes brode, and eek as thikke,
They were nat an inche asonder;
That hit was shadwe overal under;
And many an hert and many an hinde
Was both before me and bihinde.
Of founes, sours, bukkes, does
Was ful the wode, and many roes,
And many squerelles, that sete
ful hye upon the trees, and ete,
And in hir maner made festes.

Shortly, hit was so ful of bestes,
That thogh Argus, the noble countour,
Sete to rekene in his countour,
And rekened with his figures ten,
for by the figures mowe al ken,
If they be crafty, rekene and noumbre,
And telle of every thing the noumbre,
Yet shulde he fayle to rekene even
The wondres, me mette in my sweven.

AT forth they romed wonder faste
Down the wode; so at the laste
I was war of a man in blak,
That sat and had yturned his bak
To an oke, an huge tree.
Lord, thoughte I, who may that be?
What ayleth him to sitten here?
Anoon right I wente nere;
Than fond I sitte even upright
A wonder wel faringe knight,
By the maner me thoughte so,
Of good mochel, and yong therto,
Of the age of four and twenty yeer.
Upon his berde but litel heer,
And he was clothed al in blakke.
I stalked even unto his bakke,
And ther I stood as stille as ought,
That, sooth to saye, he saw me nought,
for why he heng his heed adoune.
And with a deedly sorwful soun
he made of ryme ten vers or twelve,
Of a compleynt to himselve,

The moste pite, the moste rowthe,
That ever I herde; for, by my trowthe,
Hit was gret wonder that nature
Might suffren any creature
To have swich sorwe, and be not deed.
ful pitous, pale, and nothing reed,
He sayde a lay, a maner song,
Withoute note, withoute song,
And hit was this; for wel I can
Reherse hit; right thus hit began:

HAVE of sorwe so gret woon,
That joye gete I never noon,
Now that I see my lady bright,
Which I have loved with al my might,
Is fro me deed, and is agoon.
Alas, o deeth! what ayleth thee,
That thou noldest have taken me,
Whan that thou toke my lady swete?
That was so fayr, so fresh, so free,
So good, that men may wel ysee
Of al goodnesse she had no mete!

WHAN he had mad thus his complaynte,
His sorwful herte gan faste faynte,
And his spirites wexen dede;
The blood was fled, for pure drede,
Doun to his herte, to make him warm,
for wel hit feled the herte had harm,
To wite eek why hit was adrad
By kinde, and for to make hit glad;
for hit is membre principal
Of the body; and that made al
His hewe chaunge and wexe grene
And pale, for no blood was sene
In no maner lime of his.

ANON therwith whan I saw this,
He ferde thus evel ther he sete,
I wente and stood right at his fete,
And grette him, but he spak noght,
But argued with his owne thocht,
And in his witte disputed faste
Why and how his lyf might laste;
Him thoughte his sorwes were so smerte
And lay so colde upon his herte;
So, through his sorwe and hevvy thocht,
Made him that he ne herde me noght;
for he had wel nigh lost his minde,
Thogh Pan, that men clepe god of kinde,
Were for his sorwes never so wrooth.

AT at the laste, to sayn right sooth,
He was war of me, how I stood
Before him, and dide of myn hood,
And grette him, as I best coude,
Debonairly, and nothing loude,
He sayde: I prey thee, be not wrooth,
I herde thee not, to sayn the sooth,
Ne I saw thee not, sir, trewely.

GOOD sir, no fors, quod I,
I am right sory if I have ought
Destroubled yow out of your thought;
for yive me if I have mistake.

IS, thamendes is light to make,
Quod he, for ther lyth noon therto;
Ther is nothing missayd nor do.